IMPERIAL BEN

A JEW D'ESPRIT

IMPERIAL BEN.

A Jew d'Esprit.

BY

JAMES GEORGE ASHWORTH.

London:
REMINGTON AND CO.,
5, ARUNDEL STREET, STRAND, W.C.

1879.

To E. A. B.

Dear love, to whom the Good and True
  Are angels that do only dwell
With earth's appreciative few,
When thou shalt read this booklet thro'
  I hope 'twill please thee well;
As thou dost me, my heart's dear queen;
  Thy sweet affection, fond and free,
Hath both my crown and solace been
From grey-streaked dawn to starlit e'en—
    My Muse of Poesy!

IMPERIAL BEN.

A Jew d'Esprit.

CANTO I.

Ben's Character.

Led by the nose a nation see !—
  And led too by a scheming wight,
Whose notions vastly disagree
With English love of liberty
  And reverence of right !

Distrusted even by his friends,
  Yet ruling them with orient sway,
He to his maddest measure bends
And makes th' unwilling serve his ends
  And help him on his way ;

A man, indeed, whose subtle lies
  Cajole the weak, deceive the good,
And who, Napoleon-like, would rise,
Though on a nation's groans and sighs
  And mid a sea of blood !

Such is the hero of our song—
  Mock hero more appropriate name ;
For heroes perpetrate no wrong
To gain the world's applauding tongue,
  Or win the smiles of fame !*

Ben's Parentage.

Son of a noble-minded Jew—
  A scribbler of some curious lore—
One would have deemed him noble too !
But Israel's David had to rue
  His bad sons o'er and o'er !

Unlike our Royalty (sustained
  By taxes levied on the low),
Nobility is seldom gained
Hereditarily, or drained
  From ages long ago !

Ben's Boyhood.

Our hero (Ben, the name in short
  By which he henceforth shall be known)
Tho' dowered by a deal of thought
And by sagacious teachers taught
  Had vices all his own !

* Heroes noted for a Christ-like heroism I mean. Not your Alexanders and Cæsars titled murderers ; but your Howards and Nightingales, whose motto is God and humanity !

For he would grab and grab and grab,*
  Would grab at everything he saw,
And was in fact a perfect dab
In every funny sort of fab-
  Ulous, uncanny lore.

And like a sprightly colt untrained
  No master could he meekly brook ;
He was the most erratic brained
That ever Pedagogus caned,
  For looking off his book.

Thus year by year he waxed apace ;
  A youngster of peculiar breed,
With elfish locks and elfish face,
And with an elfish sort of grace,
  And eke an elfish creed.

And scarce the father knew his son,
  And scarce the mother knew her child—
'Twas such an enigmatic one—
Whose ideas tasted of the sun,
  And were absurdly wild !

But tenderly they watched his growth,
  And dreamed a future for their Ben,

* How true it is that the boy is father to the man ! The French have lately named him Lord Grab.

That charmed the parent hearts of both,
And made them very, very loath
  To leave the world of men !

BEN TRAVELS.

If one would have an education
  'Tis not enough to go to College ;
But he must study many a nation,
Not merely for his recreation,
  But in pursuit of knowledge.

Thus deeming, on a lengthened tour,
  His parents started Master B.,
If haply he might gather power,
And wisdom for the coming hour
  Of manhood's rivalry !

With heart elate the stripling went,
  For boyhood dearly loves to roam ;
And ofttimes 'neath nomadic tent
He dreamed of that brain-tournament
  That waited him at home !

And then his musings grew sublime,
  And ideas came like inspiration ;
And he would write and jingle rhyme,
Heart-yearning for the happy time
  Of future publication !

And doubtless there would sometimes steal,
  By mountain slope or moonlit sea,
Soft transports such as young souls feel—
Ambitions that would work the weal
  Of God's humanity.

And he would dream a nobler strife
  Than couching lance in lists of fame—
Would estimate an unknown life,
With Christ-like thought and action rife,
  Much higher than a name!

But that is over. There's a time
  In every life, when we are near
The portals of a world sublime—
When we could almost seem to climb
  Into a starry sphere!

But soon, too soon, that speeds away,
  And we are left to mourn or wail
The brightness of a vanished day!
But how Ben feels I cannot say,
  So onward with our tale!

BEN RETURNS.

O'er land and sea he'd wandered wide,
  And gazed on Nature's every mood—
Now stood by Tiber's classic tide,
Or sauntered with a greater pride
  By Jordan's sacred flood.

The snow-clad hills, the glacial sea
  For ever moving slowly on—
So like the march of destiny—
And far away blue Galilee
  And hoary Lebanon.

All these he'd seen, and more indeed,
  For men and manners were the pages
He pored upon with student's greed;
Not fondlier did Porson read
  The *chefs d'œuvre* of the sages!

Thus in his travels had he made
  In wisdom wonderful progression,
And oft his proud old parents said:
"Now, Ben, you'll mount the top-most grade
  Of any one profession!"

"My dearest genitors, I'll prove
  A worthy son of worthy sire,
And full requite a mother's love;
But in what sphere I ought to move
  'Twere best that we inquire."

So in a solemn conclave they
  Did circle round the table then;
And pa and ma began to say
What they thought likeliest, but the day
  Was won by Master Ben.

I will not sing of all they said—
  Nor word by word the confab tell;
But Law and Church and even Med'-
Cine in this home discussion led,
  Tho' none bore off the bell.

For Law for him had no attractions,
  He was too fanciful a creature;
And records, briefs, and solemn pactions,
And splitting hairs in legal actions
  Were not to Benny's nature.

Nor was the Church a likelier sphere—
  Ben was not born to be a parson.
Had he but chosen that career,
Oft as in dress he did appear,
  There would have been a farce on.

And Med'cine wasn't a bit better—
  He wanted not in death to revel;
And doctors oft the soul unfetter
(Unable to make bodies better),
  And send it to the d——.

But what to be, or not to be,
  Were questions ruminated on;
And long he halted, for, you see,
A grand and glorious future he
  Had set his heart upon!

But is not honour of more worth—
  A noble nature better far—
Than all the gewgaws of the earth,
And tinsel ranks of mortal birth,
  However proud they are!

To me 'twould seem (but oft I dream,
  And this may be a dream I own)
One rustic life of manly strife,
And loving toil for child and wife,
  Out-beggars England's throne!

But dark ambition views the goal,
  And all that blocks the way shall bow;
It *must* be won—so says the soul—
If not by fair means, then by foul:
  It matters little how!*

So Benjamin, our hero, thought;
  But stay—I'll not anticipate—
Tho' hard to curb the sprightly trot
Of Peggy when he's fairly got
  Excited or elate!

Ben writes Books.

Meanwhile he burned some tons of tapers,
  And wasted nights of wholesome bed,

* This is bad morality, but it is the sort of morality Ben has practically adhered to all his life.

In writing clap-trap to the papers,
And making heroes cut mad capers
  In books, till late, unread!

First "Vivian Gray" ('twas Benny's maiden
  Adventure in the world of fame)
Came forth, all pleonastic laden,
With bombast that might put the shade on—
  An author I shan't name!

In this dull novelette he taught
  What line of conduct he'd pursue
Should Fortune grant the prize he sought,
For Gray's soliloquies are naught
  But Ben's mind bared to view!

"O that I had a little rascal
  Red fluid in my veins!"
Now was not that a wish, I ask all,
Superfluous? Had he aught of Paschal
  Immunity from stains?

But much more than such idle wishes
  Made up the volume he had written—
Much that would prove our hero vicious,
And ought to render all suspicious
  Of being Benny-smitten!

"I'll give a smile to every friend—
  I'll treat the great world to a sneer—
I'll humour weakness, and will lend
False sympathy to gain my end—
  And even drop a tear.

"Mankind shall be my mighty game—
  I'll play upon them as I please:
Their mad mistakes shall make my name,
Their follies be step-stones to fame
  And affluence and ease."

So wrote he, and thus worldly-wise
  He acts grand-vizier to-day—
Belauded to the very skies
By those he trampled on to rise—
  His "step-stone's" made of clay.

O for a "forty-parson power"—
  A hundred-Ciceronian voice—
That in this danger-pregnant hour,
As winds sway ocean when storms lower,
  I might sway England's choice!

I'd sweep him suddenly and straight,
  To dwell beneath a people's ban;
Not urged by party-spite or hate,
But for the welfare of the State
  And every Englishman!

BEN TRIES TO GET M.P.

At last Ben thought that writing books
  Was not the shortest cut to make
Himself a dweller among dukes,
And such-like in the palace-nooks
  That border some fair lake.

And so he hit on politics
  As off'ring scope for his ambition;
And deemed, forsooth! his knavish tricks
Would doubtless one day firmly fix
  Him in the first position!

For premier of this parent realm
  He dearly wished and vowed to be,
Defying fate to overwhelm!
He yearned to grasp the mighty helm
  Of England's destiny.

And so at Wycombe his appeal
  Was posted first on every wall:
"I'll work the mother country weal,
If you'll elect me!" but the chiel
  Could not succeed at all.

Tho' Dan O'Connell, Erin's boast,
  And Joseph Hume were joined together
To lift him upward, yet he lost,
A dozen paltry votes at most
  Proclaimed the state o' th' weather.

On this occasion, as I've read,
  He rolled thro' Wycombe drawn by horses,
A dressed up dandy—(as indeed
He should be who has every need
  Of a tailor for resources).

And "booing" here, and "booing" there,
  As if by "booing" worlds were won,
He kissed his fingers to the fair
With winning smile and gallant air,
  And deemed their hearts undone.

When reached the rostrum, heart beat high
  With hope and fond anticipation—
For who could meet his "glittering" eye,
Who list his voice, and yet deny
  Their votes and admiration?

So standing up in bran-new breeches,
  He gave, in easy elocution,
One of those radical stuffed speeches
Which ever in a kingdom teaches
  Republic-revolution.

"Reform's my motto; 'tis a move
  To noblest issues, and from it
The Finance, Law and Church will prove
(For true reform is from above)
  A triune benefit.

"With Aristotle, Socrates,
And sweet-voiced Plato, I take stand
Against the wealthy, and would ease
Plethoric aristocracies
A little of their land.

"Such and no other are the measures
Shall hence command my time and brain.
I love the people, and their pleasures
I'll make my own peculiar treasures,
And guard them might and main.

"I hold the interests of the many
Outweigh the interests of the few."
So spake he, full of bombast, when he
Harangued at Wycombe; bet a penny
That not a word was true!

For Benny's an adept at lies,
And great is his audacity,
He rolls them out, facing the skies,
And decks them in such winsome guise
They almost seem veracity.

But honour to the bold electors,
Untrapped by falsehood, bounce, and brag,
They wanted no such blustering Hectors
To be their home and State-protectors,
So voted him the bag.

Yet in October, nothing daunted,
  The self-same year again he tried—
The Tory party somewhat taunted,
His own opinions loudly vaunted,
  And promised lots beside.

"Sirs—gentlemen, my life is sworn
  Against disgusting factions:
Our liberties will be o'erborne,
And we in sackcloth have to mourn,
  If parties in wrong actions.

"And 'gainst a parliament septennial
  I also strongly fulminate:
'Twere better we should have triennial,
If longing for a day millennial,
  And honour in the State.

"I'll take away the onerous taxes*
  That too much shackle education—
I'll lay the keen edge of State axes
'Gainst useless office; and a factious
  Be a united nation.

"The lower orders shall be blest,
  And dormant force awakenèd;

* It's a pity these promises of Ben have not been kept. We have all sorts of taxes now and likely to have more.

I'll give to industry a zest
That shall make known to East and West
  Old England is not dead."

Read in the light of late events,
  How lying this oration seems!
While mustering mighty armaments
Our nation knows the wolfish "dents"
  Of poverty no dreams.

And trade is bad, and all the land
  So toppling to a speedy ruin—
The voice of war on every hand
Swells upward, thunder-booming; and
  All this is Benny's doin'.

But to proceed: Sirs, Smith and Grey
  Were high above him polled—
Yet unsubdued he harped alway
Upon that bright and blessèd day
  When victory crown'd the bold.

And ergo, at Marylebone
  He stood once more a Radical,
And swore in many a lofty tone
He'd make the people's wars his own
  If they would heed his call?

But doubting, doubtless, what he said,
  And startled at his bounce and brag,
Like those of whom we lately read,
They also voted him instead
  The string as well as bag.

B. TURNS T.

Well working out his "Vivian Grey"
  He hid his purpose 'neath a smile;
And stealthily groped on his way,
A Mephistopheles—or say
  Th' embodiment of guile!

The people's interests! what, I ask,
  The people to a dupe of Fame?
'Twas but a catch-word and a mask
To help him in a dubious task,
  And shape a titled name!

At Wycombe, lo! a third time see
  This Israelite of modern story!
In thirty-two and thirty-three
A rampant Radical was he,
  But now a rampant Tory.

Thus meeting clasp two wide extremes—
  The why and wherefore well is known;
For Ben is selfish, and his schemes
And darling hopes and darling dreams
  Tend to his good alone!—

So currying favour with the great
  'Gainst whom he one time loudly railed,
He forward comes a candidate
For Tory office where but late
  As Radical he failed.

But now th' electors penetrate
  The deep disguise he whilom had;
And tho' he eloquently prate,
They'll have him nor for love nor hate,
  As Tory nor as Rad.

The same with Taunton, Labouchère
  With flying colours bore the "gree;"
But never did Ben once despair,
Tho' unsuccessful year by year
  Of th' ultimate M.P.

Here at this Taunton did he act
  A traitorous Jew of Judas growth,
Defaming Connell who had backed
Him bravely when he first attacked
  The Whigs and Tories both.

"You have," cried he, "the bloody hand
  Of Dan O'Connell fondly taken;
Beware! I tell you, he's a brand
To set aflame his native land;
  Already earthquake shaken,

A human-earthquake, much more horrid
  Than ordinary earth-throes are."
Thus spoke he in a language florid,
And also just a little torrid
  And——but etcetera!

"I one time said you were a shattered
  Poor fragment of humanity,
To the four-winds of heaven scattered
Like torn-up paper, and much battered
  Like sorry wrecks at sea!

"But here to-day I proudly stand,
  And, gentlemen, a candidate
To enter your thrice glorious band,
And lend you now a cunning hand
  To lift you in the State.

"Sirs, gentlemen, if there is aught
  I pique myself the most upon
It is the mutual act and thought
That changes or mutates in naught
  I once determine on!"*

But Taunton folk were sensible,
  More sensible than Ben opined;
And well they knew his principle

* The language in this speech is superb, and the logic is most wonderful. But it gives you a good idea of Ben.

Was not at all invincible,
  But veering as the wind.

DAN BEATS BEN.

A mighty sound of irritation
  Comes booming o'er the Irish Sea—
Tis Dan O'Connell's castigation,
And never man of any nation
  So soundly thrashed as he!

"I hear" the agitator roared,
  In voice of leonine proportions,
"I hear this Israelite abhorred,
Whom once I did some aid afford,
  One of his tribe's abortions,

Has railed at me with venomed words,
  Calumniated and reviled;
But why and wherefore these discords?
With him I never measured swords,
  But rather on him smiled.

And now he mars my character
  With epithets as false as vile,
And calls me traitor; but I err
If he is not the traitorest cur
  In Albion's merry isle.

The miscreant! This I know and say,
  He is a liar doubly d——d,
A living falsehood day by day;

And should the renegade ere pray,
  His prayers with lies are crammed.

"A loathsome plague-spot on the whole,
  Of England's politics, a curse,
A leper both in mind and soul:
Not under Beelzebub's control
  Could England be much worse.

"There is no language man could use,
  No appellation howe'er base,
That would sufficiently abuse
This rank deserter to the blues,
  This miscreant of his race!

"Long years ago, two thieves were nailed
  On either side Him we adore,
And that one who blasphemous railed,
And blackguard-like our Lord assailed
  Was Ben's progenitor."

BEN IS ANGRY.

Our hero's anger burst in flame,
  Volcanic-like it raged and roared;
And soon a deadly purpose came,
To wipe away his public shame
  By pistol or by sword.

How oddly mortals think and act!
  As if a duel-murder done
Could falsify a gospel fact,

Or save an honour all intact
  Where honour there was none!

Now Dan O'Connell once had slain
  In duel-fight the bold D'Esterre,
And thenceforth vowed that ne'er again
His hands with crimson would he stain,
  And Connell was sincere!

Our hero, cognisant of this,
  Writ off a challenge to his son:
"Your father spake of me amiss,
And I'm a Hebrew Nemesis
  To see revenge is done."

But Daniel's boy was Daniel-wise,
  And coolly laughed at his heroics,
Which made Ben's Jewish blood arise
To murder-heat, and his replies
  Were other than a stoic's.

"Whene'er I can, your father's name
  I'll spatter, make despicable,
And dearly hope for very shame
Some one will try to shield his fame,
  Whom I may send to Hell.

"My hatred shall pursue him like
  A blood-hound till his head is low,
Unstopped by any Pat or Mike,

And when I see a chance to strike,
  I'll deeply plant the blow!"

How bad are they who harbour such
  Resentment! Goodness must be zero!
If in each one there is a touch
Of devilish nature, there was much
  Of devil in our hero!

And such the man—"O cursèd spite!' —
  Who rules our country and the queen!
And such the man whom some delight
To honour! Never such a night
  Of moral gloom was seen!

A ruler should be rich imbued
  With noblest qualities, I hold;
With moral force and rectitude
To battle for the right and good,
  In spite of place and gold.

A man unselfish, generous, true,
  Of rigid virtue, like the old
Republics ofttimes brought to view;
A man, indeed, like one I knew,
  And of Gladstonian mould.

BEN AT MAIDSTONE.

Let's follow Ben to Maidstone now—
  That town of infamous renown—

And mark with indignation how
A man can lie, and lie, and vow,
  To win Fame's paltriest crown !

"Here am I, noblest gentlemen,
  Consistent to consistency,
Holding the self-same views as when
At Wycombe—preaching now, as then,
  The self-same polity."

Once on a time a simple fly
  Did lay a proud old papist dead :
The wonder is that one such lie
As Benny's did not quick untie
  Or cut his vital thread.

But whom the gods love dieth young ;
  And this my logical deduction,
That whom the devil loves lives long,
To perpetrate some fiendish wrong,
  From murder to seduction.

BEN IS M.P.

And black dishonour, like a blight,
  Fell on this Maidstone when she voted
A man who knew not wrong from right
In place of Thompson, noble wight,
  For truth and honour noted.

And from that moment of his rise
  To represent the people's will,
Commence old England's agonies
And ever downward tendencies
  And dark o'ershadowing ill!

Thus ends one canto of our song,
  And ended we could wish the whole;
For musing on a matter long
Deep-dyed in infamy and wrong
  Destroys the health of soul!

No more!—we trust our words may urge
  Some few to hate tyrannic sway.
We stand upon a dangerous verge,
And should our time's eventful surge
  Roll on a harmless way,

We must thank heaven and that brave man
  Whose pen is aye a tyrant's rod,
Himself the foremost in the van
Of liberty—a veteran
  Approven of his God!

CANTO II.

To patient effort falls the prize—
  None but the patient worthy are;
And he who would ambitious rise,

Will ever find to high emprise
  Impatience is a bar!
So Benny deemed, and backward drew his
  Pretensions into privacy.
Till once more pushing into view his
Sphinx-visage by the side of Lewis,
  He won the prize M.P.

Now see him "Member of the House"
  Once nominated Philippi—
Determined dreadfully to douse
With lava-floods of flaming "Nous"
  His Irish Enemy!

Dan had been roaring eloquence,
  In brave support of Erin's cause;
And most had listened with intense
Excitement to his vehemence,
  And sometimes given applause!

'Twas discord unto Dizzy's* ears;
  'Twas devilish that his deadliest foe
Should have a "feu de joie" of cheers.
And when Dan finished, it appears
  He rose to strike a blow!

* The name of Dizzy is bestowed,
  Because his statecraft ideas are
Like reeds that bend in every road,
And cannot keep a rectitude
  Or perpendicular.

He eager rose, on triumph bent,
  On triumph oratorical;
And for a few short moments spent
His breath in speech grandiloquent,
  But laughter greeted all!

So stopping short, while anger shot
  Indignant from each baleful eye,
He fiercely shouted :—"I am not
Defeated! on this very spot
  You'll hear me ere I die!"

Thus big in bragging even then,
  He boasted like a Hebrew prophet;
And since, knaves, snobs, and gentlemen
Have listened to sarcastic Ben,
  And there's the wonder of it!

For tho' not partial to this Dizzy,
  I must allow his mind is such
That once determined on a busi-
Ness (for a dogged man is he),
  He will accomplish much.

Two things will everywhere command
  Successful issues: they are these—
A persevering spirit, and
A conscience like elastic band
  To stretch where'er you please.

And these two things our hero hath,
  And they have helped him famously
Along that labyrinthine path
He jauntily still journeyeth
  Of tortuous policy!

But he is brave and not a coward
  Who can derisive laughter bear;
And Dizzy, tho' derision showered,
Proved he was not to be o'erpowered
  And snuffed out by a sneer!

He sat him down with clenchèd teeth,
  Vowing a vow to master fate—
To trample obstacles beneath,
And win the victor's laurel wreath,
  And wear it soon or late.

Ben Perseveres

As huntsman tracks the wary game,
  Which oft escaping, still's pursued,
So Ben, now set upon a name,
Pursued the fair coquette Miss Fame
  Or p'rhaps, I should say, wooed!

No more his bombast speech compelled
  Grave senators to burst in laughter
That could not be remonstrance-quelled;

For wisdom taught him, and he held
  A golden silence after!

Save once, and then his voice was made
  To back proud land-proprietors:
"Why void the corn-laws? why?" he said;
"'Twill spoil our country, mar our trade,
  And th' wolf be at our doors!"

This nonsense met with more success
  Than Benny's maiden venture had,
Tho' it deserved it rather less:
For who could for a moment guess
  Ben's State-views were so bad!

We know the blessing of repeal:
  That proud landowner and his peasant
Have found it answer to their weal,
And that for ages both will feel
  The value of Peel's present.

And Ben, too, knew, or thought he knew,
  The blessing of their abolition;
For he had writ: "Good will accrue
When such bad laws are made anew,
  Or banished to perdition!"

And yet behold this renegade
  Apostle of consistency
Denying what he scrawled or said,

That he might mount another grade
  Of notoriety!

Ben's creed is anything or nought,
  So that his interests do but mend;
And ilka act and word and thought
Are in the soul of self outwrought,
  And for a selfish end!

&c.

Like one who through a passage gropes
  'Mid darkness to the light of day,
Ben gently scales the jagged slopes
Of fame political, bright hopes
  Attending him alway!

With frequent speaking he's grown bolder,
  For years have flown since first he spouted;
And he is wiser and much older,
And statesmen do not turn cold shoulder,
  Nor is our hero flouted!

Men deemed him once too dandified—
  A proud, presumptous, empty pate;
But now, like Gilpin in that ride
Which Cowper's muse has glorified,
  They deem he carries "weight."

And some are saying "He is clever!"
  And some that "Benjamen is great;"

But there are others (some are ever
Detractors) say "that he will never
Be useful to the State!"

But all in one thing are agreed
That he's a wily sort of man
Of whom 'twere better to take heed;
And while they listen, laud indeed,
They shun him all they can!

Ben praises Peel.

By flattery are most women won:
This was the means the devil used
When Eve was damnably undone;
And Dizzy, like the devil's son
(Our hero's not abused;

For language, when the vehicle
Of truth, distilled or doubly cleared,
Is not abuse or chargeable
For libel, tho' I know full well
The truth is sadly feared).

Judging Sir Robert Peel a woman,
In that respect I mean of course,
Used or abused this very common
But dirty weapon to undo man
With subtlety and force.

He hoped by this to gain his graces,
  And twist and twine him round and round;
Thus jumping into paying places,
Not with your slow, methodic paces,
  But by a single bound.

"Sir Robert is a model man,
  A noble statesman, true as steel!
And fit to lead a mighty clan,
To do brave battle in the van
  For Albion's world-wide weal.

"He cares not for an office merely;
  'Tis that the office opes the way
To serve the land he loves so dearly
That makes him cherish it sincerely:
  He asks not—wants not pay!

"A grand disinterestedness
  Has ever covered him with glory:
And whether in or out, no less
He'll work for Albion's happiness
  And brighten Albion's story."

Soon after Parliament resigned,
  For was it not "incapable?"
At least it was to Benny's mind!
So Fortune smiled: he not behind,
  Used every moment well!

And stumping up and down the land,
  He blamed the Whigs and praised the Tories
Saying—"Sir Robert is a grand—
Our grandest statesman. His command
  Will cover us with glories."

CHORUS.

But something more important now
  Must occupy our varied muse.
For Ben's about to take a vow
That e'en the law will not allow
  Him lightly to abuse!

BEN MARRIES.

Ye loves, etcetera,—look down!
  Our hero is about to wed—
Wreath round his ample front a crown
Of roses such as Sharon's own,
  And bless his nuptial bed!

Sir Wyndham Lewis had a wife;
  But stupid-like, Sir Wyndham died,
And left her lonesome in the strife
Of this most miserable life,
  So she became Ben's bride!

Her weight I can't exactly gauge,
  Nor can I tell her tale of years;
But she was over Dizzy's age
By fifteen summers, I'll engage,
  Tho' such a tale appears!

For who could fancy Ben would choose
  A woman much his senior
With whom to tie th' eternal noose?
But then you know 'tis like the Jews
  To value golden ore!

And she possessed a mass of coin
  That made her younger by a score:
And all but rendered her divine!
The daughter of old Pluto's line,
  The God whom most adore!

What grand potentialities
  There lurking lie in sparkling gold!
What sublimated destinies
We enter with those golden keys
  Whose magic ne'er grows old!

"Ha! ha!" said Dizzy—"I want power!
  What gives it? what but yellow coin?
Good! I may clasp it any hour,
For that dear widow has a dower,
  And she is wholly mine."

Our Ben is not like Nolly's Moses—
  He knows to make a bargain pay;
And when the bargain he forecloses,
You understand the other loses
  And diddled goes away

But ofttimes those who wed for money
  Are rightly made that money's martyr,
And find the fabled moon of honey
Is gall and wormwood, and the one he
  Deemed once an angel is a Tartar!

How Ben has proved it I can't say;
  The rumour goes that he is blest:
I hope he may be, for the day
Is coming when he'll have to pay
  The deil with interest!

But O ye loves, etcetera!
  Deal gently with our married hero,
Nor ever let domestic war
Upon his nervous fibres jar,
  And settle love to zero!

CHORUS.

Return we now to politics—
  Tho' marriage is a nicer theme!
And let us learn what further tricks

Our M.P. uses. (Thus we mix
  Reality with dream.)

BEN AT SHREWSBURY.

At Shrewsbury Ben was re-elected,
  For Maidstone wanted him no more,
As he had thoughtlessly neglected
To pay his debts, and when detected
  He knew the game was o'er!

So Shrewsbury had him, spite of lies
  And much that seemed dishonesty;
I trust she paid no penalties
Like spinsters, won by flatteries
  And many a courtly lie!

BEN DISAPPOINTED.

The Tory party was returned;
  But when the State-posts were assigned,
Ben found his expectations spurned;
And anger in him hotly burned,
  Like embers fanned by wind!

This was a disappointment truly!
  For he had toiled and lied and praised,
Expecting that when posts were newly
Distributed he should be duly
  To high position raised!

However, bottling up his spleen,
  He spake an oily language still,
As tho' no anger ere had been;
But 'neath this hypocritic mien
  Were darkest schemes of ill!

And soon his warmest phrases grew
  Lukewarm, and lukewarm went to cool!
Till last the mask away he threw,
And called "the greatest man he knew"
  A blockhead and a fool!

Such is th' unfathomed turpitude
  To which our hero now has sunk;
Acting a moral-toper, "slewed"
With drink the demon Envy brewed,
  And quite ambition-drunk!

B. ATTACKS PEEL.

"Free-trade is worthy of support,"
  Said Benjamin on one occasion;
"And Robert Peel is worthy aught
His country votes him, for the thought
  That frames it for the nation,"

And once more—"None I know or knew
  Are like our noble-hearted chief,
He is so honourable and true,

And everything that he may do
  Deserves a laurel-leaf."

But seeing that Sir Robert had
  For him no sort of predilection,
He changed his tactics like a cad,
And lo! the Tory, once a Rad,
  Went over to Protection!

And with envenomed voice he sputtered
  Against the Peelite Government,
And brutal are the words he uttered
(And oft St. Stephen's "dovecote fluttered")
  With villainous intent!

"Our noble baronet once caught,
  While bathing, th' incautious Whigs,
And stole their garments (p'rhaps for sport,)
And walked away and left them naught!"
  In th' name o' th' prophet—figs!

"Our premier is too proud of mind
  And holds too lofty a position
Ever to loose—or haply find—
A temper; but I am inclined—
  I say it with permission—

"To think that when we congregate,
  As in this solemn conclave now,
A little temper—not in hate—

Is very useful, I may state
Il faut, if you'll allow !"

And then he charged the Premier
With friendship for state-criminal,
Creating quite a canaille-stir !
But Rob Peel proved him much to err,
And made him unsay all !

"I readily apologise,
And humbly ask our leader's grace ;
My statements have been proven lies,
And here I stand, without disguise,
And in a sorry case.

"But tho' I've perpetrated wrong,
I'm not ashamed to own mistake ;
I'll put a bridle on my tongue
And henceforth"——let it be unsung,
Whatever Dizzy spake !

"If Free-trade is to be our lot,
Let Mr Cobden, Stockport's chosen,
Propose it ; but, by heavens, not
The man who is his country's blot
And would his party cozen !

"Dissolve this Parliament, betrayed,
  And foully too, and o'er and o'er,
And ask the country for its aid,
You dare not! No! you are afraid
  You'd be returned no more!

"For me, I publicly confess,
  And bless the opportunity,
That Tory rule is little less
In my belief than rottenness
  A huge hypocrisy!"

Sir Robert now in dignified
  And caustic language thus replied:
"I know not whether I should hide
My thoughts in cold contempt and pride,
  Or condescend to chide;

"But let this babbler learn this fact,
  That when he praised me long ago
I knew the motive of the act,
And deemed his praise, like this attack,
  Was but a juggler's throw."

O Ben, Ben, Ben! thou art at last
  Unmasked, and thy gambler's game
Detected! Tho' long unsurpassed
As sharper, lo! that latest cast
  Has wrought thee public shame!

Ben ousts Peel.

Free-trade behold! a settled fact,
  The Corn-laws myths of legislation;
But this sublime and crowning act
With the Coercion wrecked or wracked
  Rob Peel's administration!

But die who would not at the time
  Of triumph, and when duty done?
Was there one moment more sublime
For Moore to fall than mid the chime
  Of bullets—battle-won?

"Sir, gentlemen," Sir Robert spake,
  "These long debates so tedious are,
The country's wearied. We must make
Them shorter for our honour's sake,
  And end our wordy war!

"It were an insult to the land
  To bandy personalities!
We're here to lend a helping hand
To pilot (so I understand)
  Our State-ship o'er rough seas.

"Sir, I foresaw that I had taken
  A course would sever many ties,
Whose rupture would old loves awaken!

But still my purpose ne'er was shaken
  From noble enterprise."

"I did my duty, not in tears,
  Tho' I had ample cause for weeping;
The smallest of my many cares
The venomed jibes and envious sneers
  Of one whose hate's unsleeping

"One time he gladly had united
  His fortunes and his fame with us,
But somehow, it appears, I slighted
This placeman, so am now requited
  With bitt'rest animus!

"But if, while knowing as he must
  My public life from first accession,
He deemed me criminal, unjust,
How is it that he proffered trust
  In many a wild profession?

"The fact is, sir, his confidence
  Was strong proof (not what he perchance
    meant)
Both of my honour and good sense:
But, sir; 'twas all a deep pretence
  To further his advancement."

So Robert spake, and Benny ought
  To have sunk in shame and self-abasement,

So biting-keen the bold onslaught;
But in Ben's temperament there's naught
  That favours self-effacement.

Still Robert's race was all but run,
  Coercion the proverbial feather
That broke him; and an early sun
Saw all the Peelites quite undone,
  The lot packed off together.

But we enjoy the boon Rob gave,
  And thousands breathe his name and bless;
And from th' oblivion of the grave
His memory they will fondly save,
  While Ben's grows, less and less!

So should it be, for only those,
  Who live to work their country good
Should in a people's heart repose,
Or touch the guerdon which it owes
  Of love and gratitude!

Ben Contemptible.

Now did our hero really hate
  The Premier, or in private love him?
The fact is, Ben had much too great
Ambition, and Sir Robert's state
  Was far too much above him!

"I like the man," he once confessed,
"And would have served him mind intact;
But then I saw 'twould be the best
To oppose him for my interest—
'Twould make me—that's the fact."

Such sentiments the man discover,
They bare the hideous heart within;
He'd sacrifice dear friend or lover,
And every finer feeling smother,
So he the goal might win!

With dirty weapons so he played
A dirty and disgraceful game!
What matters? He at least has made,
Tho' man and God have been betrayed,
A grand * historic name!

The prize is clutched, but will it prove
Substantial, or an airy bubble?
'Tis doubtful, for our surest move
In politics, or war, or love,
Doth ofttimes end in trouble!

And now our second canto's ended,
The taper's dim and it is late;
We have not sung half we intended,

* Grand in the worst sense—A name that has power alone, unassociated with aught that is noble, unsurrounded by any brilliant aureole of love and sympathy.

But hope, so far, you have commended
  Our service to the State!

Farewell! but we shall meet again,
  And ere long too, or I am wrong;
For all such tricky gentlemen
As subtle, supple Master Ben,
  Deserve it "neat and strong."

CANTO III.

Tories and Whigs.

The Tories are a stand-still tribe,
  Contemplative and oh! so dull,
Above my language to describe!
Tho' some may say in merry jibe
  Of dulness it's too full!

They love the phantoms of the past,
  The shadowy ghosts of long ago;
And fondly clasping, hold them fast,
Like sailors clinging to a mast
  When boisterous tempests blow!

And all plethoric pursèd wights
  And wealthy land-proprietors,
When they are posted on State-heights
May count their antiquated rights
  Safe from plebeian paws!

But those in poverty and need,
  To whom this life is long distress,
Are down-crushed by their tyrant greed
And love of slavery, none to heed
  And none to bring redress!

But Liberals are of nobler sort,
  And "Onward!" is their battle-cry—
"Preserve the freedom for which fought
Our fathers—broaden it if aught,
  But down with tyranny."

They hold a man's a man for ever,
  Or rich or poor, or bond or free;
And it is theirs to slumber never
Till triumph crowns their high endeavour
  To win equality.

Those measures which will bless mankind
  And onward roll the Christ-king's car,
Are precious to each Liberal mind,
And as one man, are all combined
  To wage eternal war,

Against the wrong in Church or State,
  Wherever found to crush it quite—
Implacable—stern—obdurate—
As with the iron heel of fate,
  And flood the world with right!

What is Ben?

Our hero have we seen a Rad—
  At present Tory he professes;
But what he is or not—bedad!
To know would make me very glad
  It's quite beyond my guesses.

Chameleons ofttimes change their hue,
  And on their colour bets are laid,
And some will vow them black, green,
But when the creature comes to view
  They show some other shade!

Behold in England now a strange
  Political chameleon!
Whose ideas will so swiftly change
From black to white—so wide the range
  (I wish this figure done!)

That not a man, however wise,
  Can fix on what he means or thinks:
In deep, perpetual disguise
Propounding problem—policies,
  He apes th' Egyptian sphinx!

And at the time of which we write
  Who could have plumbed the Dizzy-deeps?

Like weathercock on minster height
He turns and turns from left to right,
  And now a neutral keeps!

But daily gathering mental force
  He held his party 'neath his thumb,
And was their mentor, shaped their course,
And like the infantry or horse
  They obeyed his roll-call drum!

BEN INNOVATES.

And so the years sped on apace;
  The Tories grew a mongrel-stock,
Half Liberal and half Tory race;
"But, comrades, we must keep our place,"
  Said Dizzy to his flock.

And so to pose before a nation
  A "Party" almost was destroyed,—
A bold and selfish innovation
That soundly needs a castigation,
  But geese are so decoyed!

And perhaps they well deserved their fate,
  For thus permitting Ben to rule:
Men should be thinkers, not like great
Dull blockheads, who oft graduate
  By being coached out school!

But Ben was merely working out
His programne made long years ago;
"He is a fool, a num-head, lout,
Who toils and moils and gads about
To serve his party! No!

"To rule them, make them fear you too,
And they will humbly kiss your feet,
Away with scruples! I tell you
In politics all is untrue,
Dishonour and deceit!

"A splendid juggle, where the best
Legerdemain will always win,
And, comrade, in this world's unrest
'Tis well to feather one's own nest
And mass the needful—tin!"

And once again our hero saith,
"He is a brave, tho' criminal,
Who boldly walks a tortuous path
Unrecking of the coming wrath
So he may conquer all!"

Such is Ben Dizzy! but has thought
No higher, noble business;
Has man, in God's own image wrought,
No goodlier purpose than a short
Self-apotheosis?

I'd rather burst in vernal flower,
  Or give my dust to clothe the sod,
Than wield a base unhallowed power.
I'd rather, bird-like, pipe an hour
  Than reign sin's demi-god !

Oh ! let us shun the steps of Ben,
  And walk in Milton's, Shakespeare's tread,
And Christ's, the goodliest of men ;
So earth may bless our memory when
  We slumber with the dead !

BEN ATTACKS GLADSTONE.

When Gladstone brought, in sixty-six,
  His grand Reform Bill to the fore,
Our Hebrew tried his "knavish tricks."
And gave, *sub rosâ*, coward kicks
  Till its short life was o'er !

This was the seven pound franchise
  (Franchise to free the shackled boroughs),
But Tories hooted it with cries,
And Dizzy vowed with mock surprise
  It filled his soul with horrors !

"Why ! if you pass this Bill, a vote
  Will lose its value—be degraded !
You might as wisely make a groat

The price of franchise. He must dote,
That sapient man who made it."

I want, dear reader, you to note
That speech of Dizzy's—*Nota Bene**—
And learn it every word by rote,
For shortly he will turn his coat
And be as Rad as any.

Still Gladstone might have won the day,
If Bright's Adullamites had voted,
In spite Conservative array!
(As to the figure I can't say
Tho' all the world o'er quoted!)

As 'twas, short-lived or else still-born,
It seemed so much of time ill spent—
So Gladstone thought it best withdrawn,
And England found the next day morn
Resigned the Government!

BEN'S SURPRISE-TRICK!

As plants develop from the earth
And burst in blossom or sweet flower,
So mortals, tho' of lowliest birth,
Have each some rich inherent worth
Might bless a future hour!

* New translation: "Take stock of Benny."

And like as gardeners lend their care
  To bring the wild plants to perfection,
So Governments should year by year
Develop what's inherent there
  Without class-predilection!

Thus Gladstone might have spoken, for
  Therein's his creed in little space;
And Ben, too, learnt this liberal lore,
And duped his party more and more,
  And slapped them in the face.

"All nations," said he, "are like rills
  Fed by the everlasting snow,
That rush adown the mighty hills,
Then broaden into bounding ghylls,
  And into ocean flow.

"We cannot stop them—they'll expand
  In spite of us, however clever,
And sweep those headlong from the land
Who in their march of progress stand,
  And crush them altogether.

"Then learn we from the nurse, our part:
  We've fed with milk and water long,
Now let us with deep Tory art
Make frumenty, and then each heart
  Will grow most Tory strong

"The savage likes his human dish,
  But would he eat a mummy? No!
Nor can we give aught mummyish
To England's backbone, so I wish
  You'd strike an onward blow."

Thus spake the Tory oracle.
  I should have said the resignation
That followed Glad's abortive Bill
Brought, or gave place to (which you will),
  A Ben-administration.

His party followed at his call,
  Like sheep they knew his voice's tone;
Save Cranbourne, and two others, all
Were bound in bondage—basest thrall,
  And scarce knew life their own!

Ben's was the master-mind that bowed
  Their feebler intellects at will;
They thought what only he allowed,
And if rebellious, then he cowed
  With "Now, my dears, be still."

'Twas most tyrannic! I believe
  They asked him when and how to dine;
They dare not eat and scarce dare breathe
Without Ben kindly gave them leave,
  In th' days o' auld lang syne.

And History nowitself repeats,
  For he is still a stern task-master,
And drives his slaveys, burdens, sweats,
Bamboozles, muddles, fuddles, beats,
  And douses with disaster!

And all the time he acteth thus
  He boasteth principles sublime;
But, reader, *inter nos* ('tween us),
I think him very villanous,
  And—but I want a rhyme!

'Tis sad to have a dashing thought
  And lack the power to tell it all;
'Tis sad to be in love-mesh caught,
And find your wooing winneth naught;
  'Tis sad enough to scrawl,

And find that publishers refuse
  (Because they reckon you a muff)
To chaperon your modest muse;
But saddest that I can't abuse
  Our Israelite enough!

What queerish mortals vex and try us!
  Pecksniffian bipeds, eyes-upturned!
Who'd cheat, like sly old Ananias,
Their Maker tho' they look so pious,
  If money could be earned

Or Glory—whatsoever that is;—
  I cannot tell you, tho' I own
It seems to me a glutton (drat his
Cursed palate!) who is rarely satis—
  Fied, save with blood and bone!

Hark! there's a noise of yells and groans—
  Balls shrieking—bullets whistling shrill—
The clash of swords—the hollow moans
Of stricken warriors, whose faint tones
  Will soon be hushed and still!

Of that anon, for war and glory
  Are synonyms, and Hebrew Ben
Intends to scribe his name in story,
Altho' the letters should be gory—
  Writ with the war-god's pen!

And is he Christian? So I hear!
  But hark! o'er that thrice-hallowed lea,
Angelic harpers sweet and clear
Sing "Peace on earth, and God's good cheer
  To all humanity!"

Who hath the spirit of our Lord
  And only he is one of His—
Refusing aid from murderous sword,
And dwelling in a sweet accord
  And kindly charities,

Owning the world-wide brotherhood
  Of Adam's crime-polluted race,
And toiling ever for its good
With patience, love, and fortitude,
  Mid sorrow and disgrace!

BEN A TURN-COAT.

Now, gentle reader, take good heed
  And call to mind the late oration
I asked you studiously to read:
The coat I spoke of's turned indeed
  To hide dilapidation!

"A cheap franchise would votes degrade,"
  He then said, "altogether."
But now another statement's made,
And all who trust him are betrayed,
  For Ben's no moral tether!

And "Household suffrage" (such the name
  Or appellation of his Bill,
Which first was Gladstone's) now became
The surest basis of his fame,
  Or fortune—which you will.

The Speaker, 'stounded and alarmed,
  Uprose and wildly shook his mace,
While Cranbourne indignation-armed,
The traitorous Hebrew madly stormed
  And covered with disgrace!

"St. Stephen's is a mighty show,
  Where Ben's legerdemain's applauded;
I'm sorry that it should be so,
Am sorry that I've lived to know
  Such turpitude rewarded!

"Like Joab, when he Abner slew,
  Tho' greeting with a Judas kiss,
Our Premier now has proven anew
That he's a veritable Jew
  By stabbing us like this!"

Nor was this all, for General Peel,
  Indignant also, rose to ease
His pent up-passion: "I do feel
That I must to the House reveal
  Three thoughts and they are these:

"Imprimis, nothing has so slight
  Vitality as a vital point;
Secundus, nothing is so light
As heaviness—so wrong as right
  (For times are out of joint);

"And tertius, nothing is so plastic,
  Unstable, liable to err,
So flexible, or so elastic
As th' conscience of our friend sarcastic,
  The Cabinet Minister!"

Our hero listened with a sneer,
  And when they'd finished smartly rose
To pay them back a jeer for jeer.
"I'm not surprised at what I hear—
  Best friends wax bitterest foes!

"But as to my State-polity,
  I dare the world and my two friends
To prove my inconsistency!
The great must suffer calumny—
  Envy success attends!

"The Bill embodies what hath been
  For ever my suprem'st desire!"
So spake he with unblushing mien;
The truth is, he has only been
  Consistent as a liar!

When Robert Peel (who, cold and dead,
  Still lives in England's memory)
Repealed the Corn-laws: "I," he said,
"By studious cogitations led,
  Have changed my policy."

Thus frankly owning, like a man,
  His mortal fallibility;
But Ben acts on a papist plan,
And like him shut in Vatican,
  Th' "errare" doth deny!

Let's hope that he may soon repent,
  And in his old age learn to tell
The truth, not by mere accident,
But with the pure and high intent
  Of doing what is well!

So ends this canto of our song,
  And ends too in a solemn tune:
God's moral government is wrong
If Dizzy's laurels blossom long,
  But they must wither soon!

I have an ample faith in time
  (More faith in time than in time-servers),
And if I had a vein sublime,
Would scribble now in lofty rhyme,
  High wisdom like Minerva's.

But, fare-ye-well, well may ye fare,
  My gentle readers old and young;
I've brought you thus far on as rare
A true biography as e'er
  A poetaster sung.

But I've a canto more to scrawl,
  And what is better; all veracious
And if you read on you will fall
Upon some sentiments I call
  Sagaciously sagacious.

I don't pretend that I am wise,
  Mine is a wisdom born of folly;
And haply when I poetise,
A truth from off the pen-point flies,
  And cheers my melancholy.

That last word suits my verse or rhyme,
  But deem not I'm lugubrious;
I have been merry many a time,
But pleasure comes in manhood's prime
  (At least I've found it thus),

With much of sorrow for its sauce:
  Forgive me, then, when tedious,
And kindly follow in its course
My all unequal-pinioned horse
  Which some call Pegasus.

THE INTERREGNUM.

Ben's term of office having run,
  The nation chose (and it was wise,
For England has no nobler son)
Sir Ewart Gladstone as the one
  To guide its destines!

And years roll on, and much is done
  To bless the people and the State,
And many a Liberal cause is won,

Tho' Abram's most ignoble son
  Opposed him soon and late.

But nations are like breeze-blown vanes,
  And grand old Gladstone has to bow
Before one, who not lacking brains
Wants sadly virtue's curbing reins,
  To keep him straight, I vow.

Behold, then, Ben a chief once more,
  His purpose every height to scale,
As eagles skyward ever soar;
For in our hero's varied lore
  There's no such word as fail.

CANTO IV.

Ben Makes Fireworks, Etc.

Our pyrotechnist of the State,
  With crackers, squibs, and rockets,
Determined on a glorious fête,
That should the world illuminate
  And empty England's pockets.

And soon he dazzled these and those,
  For he's a style surpasses Pain;
And even made some Liberal foes
Cry out in wonder, "All he does,
  Is proof of master-brain."

But there were others much more wise,
  Who asked this spendthrift of the State,
Shooting its money to the skies,
" Where's Gladstone's surplus?—the supplies
  We voted you of late?"

But Ben kept silence mute as stone;
  "The question" thought he, "is not fair";
But well we know tha tthey've been thrown
Away insanely, bird-like flown,
  Or melted into air.

Melted in thin air, or, alas!
  Made into murderous arms of dread,
That mow down regiments like grass,
And render earth's bright landscapes as
  Vast slaughter-fields of dead.

But we are galloping ahead,
  And now must slacken in a bit;
I wasn't with art-poet's bred,
And just as thoughts come in my head,
  So are they rhymed or writ.

One hope I have—but hope is vain,
  And so I will not tell you what
Is pirouetting in my brain,
For you might treat it with disdain—
  You might, or you might not.

There are some secrets better shrined
  Within the bosom, hid forever:
It would not do for all mankind
To know the workings of a mind
  Like Wordsworth's, devilish clever.*

Ben Buys a Canal.

Tho' wearied out with loss of rest,
  We still our labour must pursue,
And follow North, South, East, or West,
With indignation-gotten zest
  Our enterprising Jew!

A little spark will set a city,
Chicago-like, in awful blaze,
And little subtle words and witty
O'erturn an empire (Is't a pity?)
  To democratic craze!

So Ben's the magic of a wand
  That Oberon did whilom sway;
A touch will rouse a quiet land
To madness, Jingoism, and
  Tremendous war-array!

* He said on one occasion he could write as well as Shakespeare if he had a mind to. "Ah, that's it," said Lamb, "if he had a mind to!"

And problematic passages,
  Whose meaning scarce can be evolved,
Are flashed beneath the stormy seas,
And wordy wars by quick degrees
  To murderous ones resolved!

And Ben sits smiling like a (well,
  The simile will come to most,
For war's a miniature hell,
And those who make them soon will dwell
  Upon a warmer coast).

I do not love theology:
  Or rampant theologians either,
Who'd damn men to eternity
Because like others they can't see—
  I'll have to do with neither.

But if there be in truth a hell,
  For roasting or for punishment,
I think that man deserves it well
Who deals in murder, or would sell
  His brother for a cent!

And Ben's the ripest candidate
  That it has been my lot to know
For the Gehenna-likened state;
I dearly hope that ere too late
  He'll mend his ways below!

Sweet human flesh with him is cheap,
  But priceless doth he deem his own,
Tho' few would o'er his carcase weep,
If wrapt in death's eternal sleep,
  For its mere skin and bone!

What matters how rich blood is shed
  (Ben and the earth will *benefit*,
And they alone whatever's said—
The laurel-wreath will deck his head,
  And richer harvests it).

The tears of widow and the wail
  Of helpless orphans—woe on woe—
And carrion stretched on hill and vale
Are naught to him, so he pervail—
  They furnish a *bon mot!*

But Ben can play a many parts
  Upon the world's encumbered man-stage,
And stocking Hades, breaking hearts,
Must give place to his broker-arts,
  Of buying to advantage!

For he's a Shylock, head to heel,
  Fond of Rialto speculations;
  d a Canal did lately steal
  argain, for the nation's weal—
  e said 'twas for the nations!

But how the nation (or in other
  Tall language, British Interests,) gain
By such transactions, much doth bother,
Not only mine, but many another
  Conundrum-sharpened brain!

I wisn he'd help our dullard wits;
  But that's the way with Ben the clever—
He's mystery-man, and but permits
His knowledge to be doled by bits
  That puzzle more than ever.

'Tis pyrotechnist art, my friends,
  For fireworks are Dizzy's forte;
And brilliant are the lights he blends—
They wilder, dazzle, but all ends
  In darkness and in naught!

BEN AN EMPRESS-MAKER.

"What's in a name?" our Shakespeare wrote.
  "Oh," Ben cried; "much a name affords!"
And as I rather like to quote,
I pray you'll take especial note
  Of Ben's own spoken words:

"A name is power! yea! so it is!
  I've proved it, for I bear a name!
Not all my grand abilities

Would win a lovely woman's kiss
  So soon as my great Fame!

"Then how those Shakespeare collars sell,
  And Gainsboro' hats for lovely lassie,
And many more I cannot tell;
For tho' I once was fashion's swell—
  Now, *ces beaux jours sont passès!*

"Ah! but I've grown too old to sigh:
  A name, a name, is what I want.
How quack names make duped patients buy!
And ladies find strong witchery
  In sounding Sozodont!

"And, quack-like, I will give a name
  Shall save our British territory:
Queen is too miserably tame,
Unworthy of the noble fame
  That England has in story!

"Let's see—the ruling Muscovite—
  The Northern Bear's an Imperator:
Well!—Imperatress? No, not quite!
Ha! Empress! Empress! Ben, that's right—
  You beat the King-creator!

"Our Oriental subjects now
  Will never rise in insurrection!
Before that magic name they'll bow

To mother earth each dusky brow
  In abjectest subjection !

"An Empress ! Ha ! dear Nicholas !
  I've done you this time ! eh ! My trick
Old Gortchy never can surpass ;
'Twill prove him, Bottom-like, an ass,
  And doubtless turn him sick !"

Our hero was quite jubilant
  When thus he finished speaking,
And straightway he began to chant
A psalm-tune, louder than his wont—
  A chanting that was squeaking.

But why or wherefore's quite a mystery—
  Our Queen was well enough as Queen !
None of the potentates of history
(I like plain facts, and not casuistry)
  Have e'er so potent been.

And England loves that honoured name,
  More than she ever will or can
That other of barbaric fame ;
For it is Saxon, and has claim
  On every Englishman.

It argues weakness in a state
  When hankering after foreign flummery.
The Romans learnt this fact too late,

And we may, if we hesitate
  T' have done with such-like mummery!

We have traditions, no land braver;
  Let's grapple them and hold them fast,
And by our British-like behaviour,
When needs be, be each one their Saviour
  'Gainst Jew-Iconoclast!

His Oriental love of flash,
  And glare and glitter, pomp and power,
And much of such-like balderdash,
May get us in a pretty hash
  Or pickle any hour!

Resist him, then, as some great evil
  Incarnated to work us woe!
Resist him as you would the devil,
And bring him to his proper level;
  For when this Hebrew's low,

Our England once more will arise,
  And dying trade revive and grow,
Light laughter take the place of sighs,
And gladness flash from lucent eyes,
  Now veiled in misty woe.

Ben Rewarded.

Now Ben's an Earl, an English Earl;
  And lo! a coronet he wears

Above his last remaining curl :
I hope he'll (for I'm not a churl)
  Wear it for many years !

But yet I cannot help but think
  He's gained it very scurvily,
And in such way as ought to sink
His reputation—ay, and link
  His name with infamy !

Had he but wisely used aright
  Those noble gifts that nature dowered,
He might have scaled a sunny height,
And bathed in Fame's divinest light,
  Above his fellows towered.

But he has chosen otherwise—
  For splendid evil bartered good—
Made self and power his deities,
And served them with unnumbered lies
  And basest turpitude.

And when he dies, as die he must,
  And sleeps in grand Westminster's gloom,
What sweetness will perfume his dust?
What actions noble, manly, just,
  Burst forth in after-bloom ?*

* "Only the actions of the just
  Smell sweet and blossom in the dust."

Ben Martial.

War! horrid War! The Muscovite
  Is battling base Mahometan,
And men are butchered left and right
In bloody, barbarous, brutal fight,
  The devil in the van!

And shall we swell the hellish din?
  Shall England too be rent and torn,
That Ben may martial glory win?
Shall we commit gigantic sin,
  And thrice ten thousand mourn?

No, no, no, no! ten thousand noes!
  Let those who make the troubles fight.
Why should two nations come to blows,
Suffer innumerable woes,
  Because of one man's spite?

Remember we are brothers still,
  The same God-Father loves each one;
And is it His paternal will
That we should mutilate and kill
  Each other 'neath the sun?

No, no, no, no! ten thousand noes!
  The sweet dear love by Jesus given
Would bring these war-plagues to a close,
Bind up the wounded, solace woes,
  And render earth a heaven!

SAME; ETC.

Ben would uphold the nasty Turk,
  Tho' British prestige should be lost—
Uphold him in his dirty work,
With cannon, bayonet, and dirk,
  And many a mighty host!

"No nation of this nether sphere
  Is half so well prepared as we;
For we've the magic that can rear,
Vast armies, whether far or near,—
  I mean the £ s. d.

"And if the Northern Grunter choose
  To grunt at us with angry frown,
Then must our Lion slip the noose,
And with his paws historic bruise
  And knock the Grunter down!"

Such was Ben's bombast balderdash;
  And yet he wanted peace, he said!
Peace! 'twas the way to make a hash,

Of peace-relationships, and smash
  Our time-won honour dead!

But dearly boys love hidden things—
  The pantry-shelf, the freighted jar;
And dearly girls love golden rings;
And lovers, could they get them, wings—
  So dearly Ben loved war!

And so with subtle words he tries
  To play on John Bull's foible,
And make a martial heat arise;
But tho' some heed him, most are wise,
  And undecoyable!

Royal Influence.

Now comes an impulse from a quarter
  That should be neutral or unheard;
(The age Cromwellian ought to have taught her
A little caution, but the hauteur
  Of thrones has ever erred)!

I mean the Life of Albert, styled
  By many worshippers "The Good."
For me, e'en from a toddling child,
I deemed him lovable and mild,
  The type of Arthurhood!

But in this late biography
  I find him in another fashion—
A man of large antipathy,
And almost animosity,
  And eke the slave of passion!

'Tis sad to see our idols fall,
  And crumble broken in the dust
'Tis very sad to witness all
We deemed so sweet and lovable
  Unworthy of our trust!

But such is life; and those who dream
  Of confidence and truth unshaken,
Will learn things are not what they seem,
That gold is not in every gleam,
  Alas! when they awaken!

The Consort hated, with a hate
  That only could be quelled in blood,
The Russian, and in warm debate
Or council aye did advocate
  A bloody-handed feud!

And hence Scutari's beds of death,
  And Inkermann, and Balaclava,
And writhing forms and warm beneath
(O Glory! thine's a damned wreath)
  Red floods of human lava!

Victoria now, for love of him,
  Would work her buried hero's will,
And bid the demon gaunt and grim,
Whose name is War (oh! horrid whim!),
  To stalk abroad and kill!

Conjugal love is laudable,
  But doing wrong because of love
I cannot justly praise so well;
At least, the argument won't tell
  In future courts above!

Besides, our constitution's such
  That only shall the Cabinet
Hold England's helm, and not a touch
Of royal hands must move it much—
  Nay, move it not a bit!

But now the Queen, or Empress rather,
  Has strained our constitution quite;
But let nor her, nor Ben, go farther,
Or else all Englishmen will gather
  To battle for the right!

Full many a Cromwell, soul and heart,
  Tho' not perchance of Cromwell's brain,
Walks in the camp, the grove, the mart,
And at the tocsin-call would start,
  To strike with might and main.

Not haply with the sword or gun
  (Tho' if the worst came, even these),
For brighter eras have begun,
And now our liberties are won
  By harmless suffrages!

Imperialism will never do
  Where Hampden, Cromwell, had a birth;
Our fathers' spirit doth imbue
Their children all the wide world through,
  And well they know its worth!

Imperialism! what is it, save
  Presumptous arrogance and pride?—
A monstrous self-love that would crave
All for its own of good and brave—
  Self-crowned, self-deified!

A huge monstrosity of lies,
  And jugglery and double-dealing,
And lofty-handed tyrannies,
And barbarous, brutal cruelties,
  Inhuman and unfeeling!

We'll have none of it—not a shade,
  No, not the shadow of a shadow:
'Twould shackle freedom and degrade
Our noblest, who have almost made
  Old England El Dorado!

The Berlin Hoax.

Osman, the brave heroic Turk,
  By hunger conquered, had to yield;
And now the Russians made short work,
With gun and pistol, sword and dirk,
  Of others in the field!

The European nations then
  Determined on a show of power,
And so they formed a Congress, when
"Ha, ha! I'll make," said wily Ben,
  "A Continental tour."

And so, with Salisbury by his side,
  And secret treaties in his pocket,
He steered across the Channel's tide
To meet old Gortchy, Russia's pride,
  And shoot another rocket!

Among the mass of wisdom there
  He was at home, and with a grand
And almost supercilious air,
And on his lips a lurking sneer,
  He watched that motley band!

And all watched him, e'en Bismarck took
  An interest in the haughty Jew,
Who hurled defiance and rebuke

At Russia's Cæsar from his nook
  Across the Channel's blue!

And many marvelled much to see
  What sort of man this blusterer:
An old Adonis seventy-three,
Or thereabouts as near can be,
  Or else I greatly err!

He went the Turk to benefit,
  The Greeks looked to him as a Saviour,
And Russian pride was to submit,
And answer to the curbing-bit
  Of Israelite-disfavour!

Or else—but here are Dizzy's words,
  "If Russia won't obey instanter,
Then thrice ten thousand English swords
Shall make her (such are State discords)
  Do everything I want her!

"No secret treaties shall be made
  By Nicholas or Gortchakoff;
That were too villainous a trade,
And I love virtue!" so he said,
  And left in laughter off.

But shortly afterwards he drew
  From somewhere, winking all the while,
A document tied round with blue,

Such as he one time too much knew,
  Ere Fortune 'gan to smile.

It was a Treaty, secret too,
  A shameful Treaty made with Russia,
To spoil duped Turkey (so untrue
Is our abominable Jew),
  And traitorously to crush her.

Amazed th' assembled statesmen sat,
  And not a few were overawed,
Much wondering what our Jew was at;
But with a smile he told them that
  "Sweet peace was now assured."

And thus by crooked ways he went,
  Dealing in lying and deceit,
Filling the world with wonderment,
And—but my taper's almost spent,
  And so, my friend, gude-neet.

Ben again Rewarded.

Ben lately won a coronet,
  And now, chaste Muse, a Garter's gained;
But what he'll further try to get
I cannot tell you, tho' I bet
  He'll rest not till 'ts attained.

A title never made a man :
  The noblest name ennobles not
The blood which aye ignobly ran :
And if you doubt it, tell me, can
  The leopard change one spot?

Nor do the worthiest win ; this truth
  Did puzzle David long ago,
And it has puzzled me from youth,
To see the wicked thrive, forsooth,
  Like trees where waters flow.

When first the order, Garter named,
  Was king-created, only men
For honour, truth and valour famed
Could join it : now it has been shamed
  By such a one as Ben.

I do not envy him, howe'er ;
  I'd rather unsuccessful be,
Deserving better (I'm sincere,
Tho' you may think not), than I'd wear
  A crown unworthily.

Ben's Return.

Ben left glad Berlin heart-elate,
  And safely reached his destination,
Receiving from the small and great,

As tho' he'd nobly served the State,
  A many a grand ovation!

"To England have we once more come,
  Right glad to set our feet upon her,
And bring you all a blessing home,
The rich result of Torydom—
  I mean, "A peace with honour!"

What clap-trap! Had we been at war,
  Then might a peace have been achieved,
Tho' doubtful, under such a star
As Dizzy's; but the masses are
  By clap-trap aye deceived.

Look at the skirmishing to-day
  In Bosnia! Brave men will not be
Like worthless chattels given away:
Whatever statesmen write or say,
  Warm love of liberty

Leaps wildly in their free-born blood;
  More welcome e'en the silent grave
Than the inglorious servitude
Of that poor child of Adam's brood
  Who bears the doom of slave!

And Greece is disaffected, for
  Her hopes have basely been betrayed;
And spite of Dizzy, there are more

Of rumours now of deadly war
  Than e'er the Treaty made!

The truth is, that the Tories ne'er
  Have been of blessèd peace the donors,
And Dizzy ought to have stated there,
As Wilfrid Lawson did elsewhere,
  "We've brought you peace with honours."

But even then the latter word
  Would only be veracity:
For peace we had, as I've averred
(I say this, or my verse had erred
  In logic or sagacity.)

But now we must approach another
  Unnecessary complication,
Much more intricate than the other,
And which may cause a serious bother
  And trouble to the nation.

The Afghan Folly.

An embassy was madly sent
  Upon a wild-goose chase or hunt;
And as to the Ameer they went,
They one day with astonishment
  Received *a meer* affront!

Then rose a Jingo-cry throughout
  The length and breadth of India;
And England echoed back the shout
That reached and roamed and roared about
  Cabool and Candahar!

For, said they—"This bold savage thus
  Has set the Empress at defiance;
But wherefore? ah! 'tis clear to us,
The hateful Russian's animus
  Has made a *sheer alli*ance!

"And we must crush him to the dust;
  The war is necessary, good!"
But who would argue battle just,
Must argue too for beastly lust,
  And Afric's servitude!

The more men grow in manners sweet,
  The purer that the laws become,
The more we sit at Jesus' feet,
The sooner shall be sunk our fleet
  And muffled every drum!

There comes a time—would it were here!—
  When martial glory, deemed sublime,
Shall damned and devilish appear!
And war, now welcomed everywhere,
  Be stigmatised as crime!

Not yet, alas! War, *coute que coute*
  Is Premier Ben's supremest pleasure;
And now the Afghans will he shoot,
And be more brutal than the brute,
  And barbarous beyond measure.

But who's to pay the piper—eh?
  That query ought to rouse the nation!
"If India cannot, England may
And must"—so crack-brained Jingoes say;
  But what about taxation?

Are we not burdened overmuch
  Already, with a want that clings
To many with too firm a clutch?
Do not their faces show a touch
  Of direst sufferings?

Why heap our miseries—build our sorrows,
  Mass upon mass, till strength gives way?
Ah! England has some dark to-morrows,
Surcharged with war-engendered horrors,
  If Dizzy long has sway!

I fear the future! There's a cloud
  Grown larger than a human hand,
Whilst ominous thunders rumble loud,
That soon shall be a funeral shroud
  To darken all the land!

Sons of your sires, act the same:
  Brave Lawrence tells where honour lies—
Not in the cause of self and shame,
Not in the carnage-field of fame
  And horrid butcheries;

But in the cause of God and right,
  And mercy—God-like attribute—
And moral courage, that in spite
Of insult is too brave to fight
  And wrangle worse than brute!

Let's heed his counsel—it is wise;
  Nor list the fire-devouring crew,
Whose interest in a campaign lies:
A State should never jeopardise
  The many for the few.

But Dizzy thinks not of the many—
  His thoughts embrace and circle one;
And if his fortunes can have any
Enhancement, Israelitish Benny
  Would see the throne undone.

Already he has climbed as high
  As mortals usually dream;
But can a dukedom satisfy?
Just list to Ben's soliloquy
  Upon this weighty theme:

"Would God that I were some poor churl,
  Born unto toil and rustic peace!
I'd barter honours of the Earl,
If madd'ning thoughts that eddying whirl
  Within my brain would cease!

"His, though a humble, is a lot
  That happiness sublimely crowns;
Possessing nothing, he has what
A potentate possesses not,
  High lifted near to thrones:

"Contentment's rose-wreath twines his brow,
  A rose-wreath that has ne'er a thorn,
And gives him grandest heaven now;
Whilst I, tho' lord of most below,
  Can only sigh and mourn.

"Ambition's curse is o'er me thrown,
  And holds me like a slave in thrall;
The loved adviser of the throne,
I long to grasp it for mine own,
  And rule, the lord of all!

"My food is tasteless—sour my wine;
  And nature wears not now the dress
That one time made her look divine:
All's lacking, and the crown not mine,
  And life is weariness!

"'Tis discontentment breathes o'er me
  A cursèd and unhallowed spell;
And while a loftier height I see
To scale, whatever it may be,
  My bosom is a hell."

Here will we leave our hero Ben;
  He points a moral, not adorns
A tale, like some of Albion's men
Who've writ their names with golden pen
  To bless those brighter morns

That yet shall be, when earth is given
  To righteousness and love fraternal—
When darkness to its caves is driven,
And rainbow brightness beams from heaven,
  A brilliancy supernal.

It shall be, yea, it must be so!
  Or else this hoary world will swing
Around its centre evermo'
Shadowed by darkest shades of woe
  And sin and suffering.

For He has spoken, God has said—
  He shall not fail or be o'erthrown;
As waters cover ocean's bed,
So righteousness shall world-wide spread,
  And all be Jesu's own.

In every heart a love of good
  Shall dominate and rule forever;
In every heart a hate of rude
And barbarous, bloody, brutal feud
  Shall be extinguished never.

Our armaments on every coast,
  Our soldiers, like the brave Othello,
Shall find their occupation lost!
And no more man be made a ghost
  By th' red hand of his fellow!

FAREWELL.

Now, reader mine, once more farewell:
  I take my leave in troublous times,
And daily do our troubles swell;
While India,—but I cannot tell
  The whole in jingling rhymes.

'Twere useless: have you not the Press?
  But do not trust the *Telegraph*,
And one whose title all can guess:
They make the truth for ever less,
  And only give you half!

Which half's a lie, and therefore not
  To be believed in by the wise;
For Dizzy by his bribing's got
Them 'neath his thumbscrew, and I wot
  That he's the prince of lives.

They didn't bribe the Indian Press—
  The Native Indian Press of course—
No?—no! they gagged it, I confess,
Garotter-like—crushed with no less
  Than rude barbaric force.

Not quite the way to win affection
  From subject peoples, is it now?
'Twill rather rouse an insurrection
Against our Infidel-Protection,
  And lay our Empire low.

Enough, more than enough, I've said.
  Big volumes might be scribbled still,
Tho' doubtful whether they'd be read;
And so I may as well to bed,
  And dream my verses will.

THE END.

London: Remington and Co., 5, Arundel Street, Strand.

G.